

# Time to Listen

Poetry Day Ireland 2020

With Cavan Library Service  
and writer Heather Brett



## Postcards from the Journey Out

At that time there was always silence:  
Mute years in a windowless room,  
a language for waiting  
her palette of light for the dark hours  
when the words had meaning  
and gestures were given a colour:  
The shadows move towards brilliance.

A Jubilee pump stands across  
from the Reading Room  
two stops up from the bakery  
(a shilling taxi ride to town)  
from the ladies with floury hands  
and cinnamon tissue paper to wrap the bread.  
The piece torn from the loaf  
is still warm, soft and shaped like a cloud.

A pink tree covers half the garden.  
The branches reach, dip and lift  
Like arms, bent at the elbow.  
This pink flowering as ornate  
as a calligrapher's 'V'.

From a child's height  
she stares up through the window  
Hypnotised by the rush and gambol  
of so many raindrops  
Her father has gone  
and her mother's spite crackles;  
atoms of hate explode in the dark.  
So much static,  
so many wavy lines.

Tw denominations rest in the one graveyard.  
A six-foot wall begins at the main gate,  
continues a further ten underground.  
There can be no fraternizing among corpses,  
kicking with either foot  
must be done on home turf.

She could not leave so lightly so lightly,  
No pleasing done. no lasting touch,  
no family ties.  
So, she carved two children for herself  
hewed their bodies from scented pine  
sculpted their faces from a willow trunk,  
used sour sloes for eyes  
and dressing them in the flame and gold of Autumn  
and carrying them on her back  
crossed the Stateline forever.

Then, there was always silence.  
But from this bridge, Christmas lights sparkle,  
There is an avenue of stars to walk along  
and even the Liffey can mirror reflections;  
A neon fat-cheeked Santa,  
a myriad of hybrid dreams.

**Heather Brett**